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ABSTRACT

This study examined the verbal message strategies employed in the two 1988 presidential debates by Vice-President George Bush and Governor Michael Dukakis, independently and comparatively. A number of broad verbal categories were developed to code the messages of each candidate from videotapes and transcripts. Verbal characteristics under investigation included verbal context of the message, attack/refutation ratio, argumentative tactics, debate mistakes, language devices, forms of support, and forms of reasoning. Results revealed that (1) Dukakis was clearly more attact-oriented in both debates than his counterpart; (2) Bush engaged in much more refutational behavior in the first debate than he did in the second one; (3) Bush offered nearly twice as many direct statements of policy in the first debate as Dukakis did in the second debate; and (4) Dukakis made considerably more direct references to his opponent than Bush did. (Seventeen references and an appendix containing the Verbal Coding Sheet are attached.) (Author/KEH)

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A Comparative Verbal Analysis of the Two 1988 Bush-Dukakis Presidential Debates

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the verbal message strategies employed in the two 1988 presidential debates by Vice-President George Bush and Governor Michael Dukakis, independently and comparatively. For the purposes of this research, a number of broad verbal categories were developed for the analysis, including: (a) verbal context of the message; (b) attack/refutation ratio; (c) argumentative tactics; (d) debate mistakes; (e) language devices; (f) forms of support; and (g) forms of reasoning. From debate videotapes and transcripts, the researchers examined each candidate message and panelist question for the verbal characteristics under investigation. Among the findings were that: (a) Dukakis was clearly more attack oriented in both debates than his counterpart; (b) Bush engaged in much more refutational behavior in the first debate than in the second one; (c) Bush offered nearly twice as many direct statements of policy in the first debate as Dukakis in the second debate; and (d) Dukakis made considerably more direct references to his opponent than Bush did.

A Comparative Verbal Analysis of the Two 1988 Bush-Dukakis Presidential Debates

Introduction

The study of presidential debates has burgeoned since the first debates of 1960. The majority of literature on presidential debates supports the notion that debates affect public perception of a candidate's image (e.g., Brydon, 1989; Herbeck, 1989; Hink, 1988; Keyton, Wall, & Golden, 1989; Martel, 1983; Trent & Friedenberg, 1983) and a candidate's image can affect voting behavior (Time, 1988, October 10; Trent & Friedenberg, 1983). Presidential candidates must employ certain debate strategies, project certain character qualities that create positive images and perceptions in the eyes of the audience, and be seen as competent individuals on national and international issues (Martel, 1983; Trent & Friedenberg, 1983) in order to "win" debates and the subsequent election.

The purpose of this study was to code the verbal messages of Vice-President George Bush and Governor Michael Dukakis in the two 1988 presidential debates. The two 90-minute Bush-Dukakis debates were sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. The first debate was held on September 25, 1988 at Wake Chapel at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the second was held

on October 13, 1988 at Pauley Pavilion at the University of California, Los Angeles. The moderator for the first encounter was Jim Lehrer, PBS. The panelists were Peter Jennings, ABC; Anne Groer, the Orlando Sentinel; and John Mashek, the Atlanta Constitution. The moderator for the second encounter was Bernard Shaw, CNN. The panelists were Ann Compton, ABC News; Margaret Warner, Newsweek; and Andrea Mitchell, NBC News. Both debates featured the same format: initial panelist question to candidate A, two minutes to respond; candidate B rebuttal, one-minute limit; question to candidate B (from the same panelist), two minutes to respond; Candidate A rebuttal, one-minute limit. In the first debate, the initial seven primary questions dealt with domestic policy issues, while the last five dealt with foreign policy issues. In the second debate there was no clear distinction between the ordering of domestic and foreign policy issue questions. Each candidate had the opportunity to make a two-minute closing statement in the debates. Secondary questions (from the same panelist) were not always focused on the same subject matter as the initial panelist questions in the two debates. No candidate cross-examination was provided for in the two encounters.

According to Newsweek (1988, September 26), Bush had a narrow edge in the polls prior to the first debate. A Time (1988, October 17) poll performed prior to the first debate

found Dukakis slightly ahead in the opinion polls, but no better than even with Bush in probable electoral votes. After the first debate Bush held an intimidating probable 270 electoral votes (Time, 1988, October 31). A poll conducted after the second debate placed Bush 17 points ahead of Dukakis (Time, 1988, October 31).

Methodology

For the purposes of this research, the following broad categories of verbal information were examined: (a) verbal context of the message; (b) length of the message; (c) initiator of topics; (d) attack/refutation ratio; (e) argumentative tactics; (f) debate mistakes; (g) language devices; (h) forms of support; (i) forms of reasoning; (j) other message tactics (Martel, 1983); (k) panelist questions (Downs, Smeyak, & Martin, 1980; Martel, 1983). The unit of analysis employed in the study was each single message presented by a candidate without interruption by his counterpart or by the moderator. If a particular rhetorical characteristic were noted in a single candidate message, its presence formed the basis for counting it, not the number of times it appeared in that message. (See a sample coding sheet in the appendix of the paper.)

In order to perform the verbal analysis of the two presidential debates, videotapes were made and verbatim transcripts were acquired from the sponsors of the events, the

Commission on Presidential Debates. From the transcripts and the videotapes, the researchers examined each candidate message and panelist question for the rhetorical characteristics under investigation. The two investigators made independent decisions in the coding process and then compared their markings; in almost every instance their notations were in agreement. If not, then a review of the message involved was performed until resolution was achieved.

Results

First Presidential Debate

There were a total of 48 candidate messages in the Wake Forest debate, 24 for Bush and 24 for Dukakis. More specifically, the debate featured 12 responses to initial panelist questions, 11 responses to secondary questions, 23 rebuttal statements, and closing statements from each candidate. Total candidate message time was 71 minutes, 36 seconds (4,296 seconds) or 89.50 seconds per message: Bush, 35 minutes, 15 seconds (2,115 seconds), or 88.13 seconds per message; Dukakis, 36 minutes, 21 seconds (2,181 seconds), or 90.88 seconds per message. Dukakis utilized a little over one minute more of message time than Bush; since Bush was accorded one less panelist question (where a two-minute response was allowed), but one more rebuttal (where a one-minute response was allowed) than his counterpart, the differential is accounted

for. Both candidates utilized 98 percent of their available response time.

Initiator of Topics. A panelist initiated the topic in 54 percent of the Bush messages, and in 71 percent of the Dukakis messages. In 25 percent of the Bush messages and 21 percent of the Dukakis messages, the candidate initiated the topic, while in 29 percent of the Bush messages and 17 percent of the Dukakis messages the topics were opponent-initiated.

Attack/Refutation Ratio. Dukakis engaged in considerably more opponent attack activities than his counterpart (present in 88 percent of the Dukakis messages as opposed to 50 percent of the Bush messages), while Bush incorporated refutation from remarks of his opponent in significantly more of his messages (29 percent) than did Dukakis (4 percent).

Argumentative Tactics. Bush made a direct statement of policy in 79 percent of his messages, while Dukakis did so in 58 percent of his messages. Development and explanation was provided for in 83 percent of the Bush messages and 71 percent of the Dukakis messages. Rhetorical questions were utilized by Bush in as many as 25 percent of his verbalizations, while Dukakis employed the strategy in only 4 percent of his messages. Both candidates offered circumvention in only 4 percent of their verbalizations. Redundancy was incorporated

in 21 percent of the Bush messages and 4 percent of the Dukakis messages. Bush provided a restatement of his position at the conclusion of 33 percent of his messages, while Dukakis did so in 17 percent of his messages. While Bush made positive references to his opponent in none of the messages, he made a negative reference in 54 percent of them; Dukakis made positive reference to his opponent in 13 percent of his verbalizations, while he made negative references in as many as 79 percent of them. Bush utilized emotional appeals to commonly held values in 13 percent of his answers; emotional appeals to commonly held values were a feature of 21 percent of the Dukakis messages, while appeals to special audiences (in this case, the working class) were incorporated in another 21 percent of his messages.

Debate Mistakes. Unfamiliar jargon appeared in as many as 21 percent of the Bush messages but in only 4 percent of the Dukakis messages. The two candidates rarely failed to incorporate development and explanation in their messages; Bush did so in 8 percent of his messages, Dukakis in 4 percent of his messages. Likewise, ineffective transitions in poorly developed or explained messages were featured in only 4 percent of the Bush messages and in none of the Dukakis messages. Contradictions emerged in none of the Bush messages and in only 4 percent of the Dukakis messages.

Language Devices. A literal analogy was featured in none of the Bush messages and in only 4 percent of the Dukakis messages. Bush employed figurative analogies in 29 percent of his messages (e.g., "thousand points of light"), while Dukakis did so in only 8 percent of his messages (e.g., "teeter-tottering on a mountain of debt"). Metaphors were featured in 8 percent of the Dukakis answers (e.g., "Joe Isuzu of American Politics") but in none of the Bush answers. Neither candidate incorporated similes, parallelism, or alliteration in their verbalizations. Repetition was employed in 8 percent of the Bush messages and in as many as 21 percent of the Dukakis messages. Antithesis was featured in 4 percent of the Dukakis responses but in none of the Bush responses. Loaded language was incorporated in 21 percent of the Bush messages and in 13 percent of the Dukakis messages.

Forms of Support. Bush utilized factual illustrations in 29 percent of his responses, while Dukakis did so in 42 percent of his responses. Both candidates employed hypothetical illustrations in 8 percent of their messages. Testimony was incorporated in 4 percent of the messages emanating from both contenders. While Bush employed statistics in 13 percent of his answers, Dukakis did so in 21 percent of his answers. Bolstering was employed by Bush in as many as 17 percent of

his messages, while it appeared in only 4 percent of the Dukakis messages.

Forms of Reasoning. Deductive reasoning was utilized by Dukakis in 13 percent of his messages, but never by Bush. In contrast, Bush employed inductive reasoning in 8 percent of his messages, while Dukakis never did. Causal reasoning was a feature in 13 percent of the Dukakis messages, but in none of the Bush messages.

Other Message Tactics. Humor was incorporated in 17 percent of the messages emanating from each candidate. Direct reference to the other candidate was made by Bush in 4 percent of his messages, while it appeared in 17 percent of the Dukakis messages. Indirect reference to the other candidate was evidenced as follows: (a) "Mr."--none of the Bush messages, 46 percent of the Dukakis messages; (b) title--29 percent of the verbalizations of each candidate; (c) "My opponent"--17 percent of the Bush responses, none of the Dukakis responses; and (d) pronoun--25 percent of Bush answers, 17 percent of the Dukakis answers.

One-sided messages were features in only 4 percent of the Bush responses, while two-sided messages appeared 21 percent of the time. Dukakis never utilized one-sided messages, but relied on two-sided messages in 13 percent of his answers. Bush pre-empted an opponent attack in 17

percent of his verbalizations, while Dukakis never did so. Bush engaged in a "shotgun blast" (Martel, 1983) of his opponent (denunciation of his record, positions, character, or campaign) in 33 percent of his messages, while Dukakis did so in as many as 58 percent of his messages. Neither candidate engaged in offering a "laundry list" (Martel, 1983) of difficult and incriminating questions for his opponent. Bush provided a direct challenge to his opponent in 13 percent of his messages, while Dukakis did so in 21 percent of his messages. Bush "turned the tables" (Martel, 1983) on his opponent (redirecting the essence of the attack of the opponent back on him) in 17 percent of his responses; Dukakis utilized this strategy in 8 percent of his responses. Bush flatly denied attack lines of his opponent in 13 percent of his answers, Dukakis did so in 13 percent of his answers. Bush employed quotable, compelling lines (e.g., "thousand points of light," "gentler and kinder nation") in 21 percent of his verbalizations, while Dukakis did so in only 4 percent of his verbalizations (e.g., "Joe Isuzu of American politics"). Both candidates highlighted the evasiveness of their opponent in 4 percent of their messages. Likewise, both Bush and Dukakis complemented their opponent ("tossing bouquets") in 4 percent of their messages. Neither candidate offered an apology or "confessional" in any of his responses.

Panelist Questions. Thirteen percent of the panelist questions might have been described as hostile: 9 percent of the Bush questions and 17 percent of the Dukakis questions. Four percent of the questions could have been described as speculative, hypothetical, or over specific: 9 percent of the Bush questions in each case, but none of the Dukakis questions. Leading questions were given to Bush 9 percent of the time, to Dukakis as much as 33 percent of the time. Value laden questions were offered to Bush 18 percent of the time and Dukakis 8 percent of the time. Twenty-seven percent of the inquiries of Bush, and 33 percent of the inquiries of Dukakis could have been described as "question begging." Dukakis received multifaceted questions (50 percent) more frequently than Bush (17 percent). Neither candidate was a recipient of a vague, unfocused question, a two-in-one question, one which associated X response with a desirable goal, or one which was asked previously. Bipolar questions were presented to Bush 18 percent of the time, while Dukakis received them as much as 42 percent of the time. Loaded questions were directed at Bush on 9 percent of the occasions, to Dukakis on 17 percent of the occasions. Dukakis was the only recipient of a prior statement question (8 percent).

Second Presidential Debate

There were a total of 46 candidate messages in the Los Angeles debate, 23 for Bush and 23 for Dukakis. More specifically, the debate was comprised of 11 responses to initial panelist questions, 11 responses to secondary questions, 22 rebuttal statements, and closing statements. Total candidate message time was 69 minutes, 12 seconds (4,152 seconds), or 90.26 seconds per message: Bush, 33 minutes, 39 seconds (2,019 seconds), or 87.78 seconds per message; Dukakis, 35 minutes, 33 seconds (2,133 seconds), or 92.74 seconds per message. Dukakis used up nearly two more minutes of message time than his counterpart. Bush utilized 96 percent of his available message time. Dukakis used up 102 percent of his available message time.

Initiator of Topics. A panelist initiated the topic in 78 percent of the Bush responses and in 74 percent of the Dukakis responses. Candidate-initiated topics occurred in 13 percent of the Bush messages and in 22 percent of the Dukakis messages. Opponent-initiated topics were involved in 17 percent of the Bush answers and 13 percent of the Dukakis answers.

Attack/Refutation Ratio. Bush attacked his opponent in 30 percent of his verbalizations. Dukakis did so in as many as 65 percent of his verbalizations. Refutation from opponent

remarks was featured in 9 percent of the Bush and Dukakis messages.

Argumentative Tactics. A direct statement of policy was incorporated in 61 percent of the Bush responses, but no more than 43 percent of the Dukakis responses. Development and explanation was built into 83 percent of the Bush and Dukakis verbalizations. Rhetorical questions were posed in 17 percent of the Dukakis messages, but none of the Bush messages. Likewise, 17 percent of the Dukakis answers featured circumventions, while none of the Bush answers did. Redundancy was incorporated into 17 percent of the Bush messages and 9 percent of the Dukakis messages. Bush restated his position at the conclusion of 26 percent of his responses, while Dukakis did so in 13 percent of his responses. Bush made positive references about his opponent in 13 percent of his verbalizations, while Dukakis never did this. Negative reference to his opponent was utilized by Bush in 43 percent of his messages, but by Dukakis in as many as 65 percent of his messages. Emotional appeals were employed by Bush in only 4 percent of his answers and never by Dukakis.

Debate Mistakes. Unfamiliar jargon was incorporated in 17 percent of the Bush responses and 13 percent of the Dukakis responses. Lack of development and explanation appeared in 9 percent of the Bush responses and 13 percent of

the Dukakis responses. Ineffective transitions were evidenced in 4 percent of the Bush messages and 9 percent of the Dukakis messages. Neither candidate committed contradictions in his verbalizations.

Language Devices. Bush utilized a literal analogy in only 4 percent of his messages, Dukakis never did. Both candidates employed figurative analogies in 9 percent of their responses (e.g., "thousand points of light"). Dukakis incorporated a metaphor in only 4 percent of his messages, Bush never did. Neither candidate utilized similes, alliteration, or antithesis in his verbalizations. Parallelism was evidenced in 4 percent of the Bush and Dukakis verbalizations. Repetition was found in 4 percent of the Dukakis messages, but in none of the Bush messages. Loaded language was featured in 13 percent of the Bush responses and in 4 percent of the Dukakis responses.

Forms of Support. Factual illustrations were employed by Bush in 25 percent of his messages and by Dukakis in 22 percent of his messages. Hypothetical illustrations were utilized in only 9 percent of the Bush responses and 4 percent of the Dukakis responses. Testimony was incorporated in only 4 percent of the Dukakis answers, while Bush never used it. Both contenders used statistics in only 4 percent of their verbalizations. Bolstering was employed by Dukakis in 4 percent of his messages but was never utilized by Bush.

Forms of Reasoning. Deductive reasoning did not emerge in any candidate messages. Inductive reasoning was used by both candidates in 9 percent of their messages. Analogical reasoning was used by both Bush and Dukakis in only 4 percent of their messages. Causal reasoning was evidenced in 13 percent of the Dukakis messages but in only 4 percent of the Bush messages.

Other Message Tactics. Humor was a feature of 17 percent of the Bush and Dukakis verbalizations. Direct reference to the opponent was made by Dukakis in as many as 26 percent of his messages, while Bush never made direct reference to his opponent. Indirect reference to the other candidate was evidenced as follows: (a) "Mr."--none of the Bush messages, 30 percent of the Dukakis messages; (b) title--35 percent of the Bush responses, 48 percent of the Dukakis responses; (c) "my opponent"--17 percent of the Bush messages, none of the Dukakis messages; (d) pronoun--43 percent of the Bush messages, 4 percent of the Dukakis messages; (e) name--none of the Bush messages, 17 percent of the Dukakis messages.

One-sided messages were employed by Bush in only 4 percent of his responses, while they were never used by Dukakis. Two-sided messages were evidenced in 13 percent of the Bush answers but in none emanating from Dukakis.

Neither candidate pre-empted the attack of the other. The "shotgun blast" tactic was employed by Bush on 13 percent of the occasions, by Dukakis as much as 35 percent of the time. "Laundry listing" was never used by Bush, but was by Dukakis in 9 percent of his messages. Bush directly challenged his opponent 9 percent of the time, Dukakis did so 4 percent of the time. Both of the candidates "turned the tables" on the other in 4 percent of their messages. Likewise, both Bush and Dukakis flatly denied the attack lines of the other in 4 percent of their responses. A quotable, compelling line appeared in only 4 percent of the Bush messages ("kindler and gentler nation"), but in none of the Dukakis messages. Bush highlighted the evasiveness of his opponent in 4 percent of his responses, Dukakis never did. Bush complimented his opponent ("tossing bouquets") in 23 percent of his messages, Dukakis never did.

Panelist Questions. Twenty-three percent of the total questions could have been considered hostile: 9 percent of the Bush questions and 36 percent of the Dukakis questions. Twenty-seven percent of the questions might have been described as speculative: 18 percent of the Bush questions and, 36 percent of the Dukakis questions. Of all the questions posed to each candidate, 18 percent could have been described as having a hypothetical orientation. Neither candidate was given an overly specific question, a bipolar question, a two-in-one

question, or a question which associated a response with a desirable goal.

Of the questions given to Bush, 27 percent appeared to be leading while of those directed at Dukakis, 5 percent seemed leading. Five percent of each candidate's questions could have been considered value laden. Question begging appeared to have been a feature of 5 percent of the inquiries directed at Bush, whereas Dukakis did not seem to receive any inquiries of this nature. Eighteen percent of the Bush questions and 27 percent of the Dukakis questions were multifaceted. Only 5 percent of the Bush questions appeared vague and unfocused; none of the Dukakis questions seemed so. Eighteen percent of the questions directed at Dukakis could have been considered loaded; none of those directed at Bush would have been so considered. Prior statement questions were given to Dukakis 18 percent of the time, but never to Bush. Twenty-seven percent of the questions posed to Bush had been asked in the first debate; this pattern never occurred with Dukakis.

Discussion

A number of comparisons in the verbal style of candidates within a single debate and between the two debates are possible from the data collected from the Wake Forest encounter and the one in Los Angeles.

Clearly, Dukakis was more attack-oriented than his counterpart in both debates. This finding is in line with Trent and Friedenberg (1983) who argued that a challenger should be more inclined to attack than an incumbent in the campaign context. Taking the debates together, Dukakis attacked his opponent in 77 percent of his message opportunities, while Bush did so only 40 percent of the time. Interestingly, Bush engaged in much more refutational commentary in the first debate than in the second debate (29 percent to 9 percent of the messages).

In both debates, Bush offered proportionally more direct statements of policies than his counterpart; both candidates presented more such statements in the first debate. Bush provided almost twice as many direct statements of policy in the first debate than Dukakis in the second debate. Development and explanation was given by the contenders relatively evenly and frequently in the debates. Rhetorical questions were a Bush tactic in the first debate, and a Dukakis tactic in the second debate. Dukakis circumvented answers to four questions in the second debate. While Bush was much more redundant than his counterpart in the first debate, he was more moderately so in the second debate. In both debates Bush restated his position at the conclusion of his remarks twice as often as his opponent. While Dukakis incorporated

positive references to his counterpart in three messages (Bush never doing so) in the first debate, the opposite was the case in the second debate. In both debates, Dukakis made considerably more negative references about his opponent than did Bush; this finding coincides with data cited earlier about Dukakis' greater attack orientation. Both candidates employed emotional appeals more in the first debate (particularly Dukakis), most likely because of the questions asked; this tendency was evidenced, for example, in Dukakis' emotional appeals to the working class in five messages associated with the first debate (special audience appeal not evidenced from Bush in either debate nor from Dukakis in the second debate).

Unfamiliar jargon was employed much more frequently by Bush in the first debate; the candidates were relatively even in utilizing such jargon in the second debate. Unfamiliar jargon evidenced in these debates seemed to be associated with specific defense systems and economic terminology. Only one message contradiction was isolated in the two debates.

Figurative analogies were most frequently incorporated in Bush messages in the first debate. The following language devices were utilized rarely, if at all, by the candidates in both debates: literal analogies, metaphors, similes, parallelism, alliteration, and antithesis. Repetition was employed

particularly by Dukakis in the first debate. Loaded language was utilized in more Bush messages in both debates.

Factual illustrations were employed by Dukakis twice as often in the first debate than in the second one; they were utilized evenly by Bush in the two encounters. Statistics were incorporated in more candidate messages in the first debate; still, they appeared in no more than five messages of either candidate in the debates. Bolstering strategies were employed more often by Bush in the first debate than in the second debate; they were rarely incorporated in Dukakis messages.

Dukakis utilized deductive reasoning in the first debate; Bush never used it. Inductive reasoning was never featured in Dukakis messages in the first debate; it was used on two occasions by Bush in the first debate and by both candidates in the second debate. Analogical reasoning was never evidenced in Dukakis verbalizations in the first debate, but was found in one Bush message in the first debate and one of each candidate in the second debate. Dukakis relied on causal reasoning more frequently than his counterpart in both debates.

Humor was employed equally (in four messages) by the candidates in both debates. Direct references to the opponent were made significantly more often by Dukakis than by Bush; in fact, Bush made such a reference only once in the first debate and never in the second debate. This finding seems to

coincide with Dukakis' greater attack orientation cited earlier. Indirect references to the opponent can be compared as follows: (a) Dukakis very frequently made indirect reference to his opponent as "Mr. Bush," while Bush never made reference to his opponent through the use of "mister"; (b) the candidates evenly indirectly referred to each other through the use of the opponent's title (seven messages), while in the second debate this strategy was used more often, particularly by Dukakis (11 messages compared to Bush's eight messages). Two-sided messages were used by Bush in as many as five of his responses in the first debate and never by Dukakis in the second debate. Bush made an attempt to pre-empt the attack of his opponent in the first debate, but never did so in the second debate; Dukakis did not utilize this tactic in either debate. The "shotgun blast" strategy was employed significantly more frequently by Dukakis in the first debate (14 messages) than in the second debate (eight messages) or by Bush in either debate; Bush utilized this strategy more often in the first debate (eight messages) than in the second debate (three messages). In line with this attack orientation, Dukakis directly challenged his opponent on five occasions during the first debate, while Bush did so three times. This tactic was less relied upon by candidates in the second debate. Bush "turned the tables" on his opponent twice as often as Dukakis in the

first debate (four messages to two); both candidates used this technique only once in the second debate. Bush flatly denied the opponent's charges on three occasions in the first debate. Quotable, compelling lines were employed by Bush most often in the first debate (five messages); they were never utilized by his opponent in the second debate. Bush complimented his opponent ("tossing bouquets") on three occasions in the second debate.

Many more of the questions were speculative in the second debate than in the first. The opposite was true for hypothetical questions. Looking at the two debates together, Dukakis was the recipient of six times as many hostile questions. Dukakis received four times as many leading questions as Bush in the first debate; in the second debate, Bush received three times as many leading questions as Dukakis. Panelists engaged in question begging much more frequently in the first debate than in the second. Multifaceted questions were posed more frequently to Dukakis than Bush, particularly in the first debate. Bipolar questions were more frequently asked of Dukakis (five) in the first debate than his counterpart (two); neither candidate was offered them in the second debate. As stated earlier, three questions posed to Bush in the second debate had been asked in the first debate.

There are two limitations of the study that deserve mention regarding the interpretation of the data analysis. First, the analysis focused primarily upon the verbal characteristics present in individual candidate messages and not upon the issue context or the sequential patterns between candidate comments. Second, no data were collected on perceptions of the audience in the facilities themselves or the media audience. The researchers made no attempt to test the effects of the verbal strategies or acknowledgment of their presence by an audience.

It is difficult to say who won these debates on the basis of the verbal evidence provided. According to Newsweek (1988, October 3), polls after the first debate found the public to be evenly divided; 42 percent claimed Dukakis won, while 41 percent argued Bush won. A Time (1989, October 10) poll performed by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman, found that Bush won the first debate--at least as far as image was concerned. Time (1988, October 10) further claimed, "Even on matters of style, Bush does well. Although voters judged Dukakis the 'better debater,' they found Bush 'more presidential' and more 'likeable'--qualities far more likely to guide them in the voting booth" (p. 27). These findings coincide with those of Herbeck (1989) whose research suggested that Dukakis' attack orientation affected his image negatively. Herbeck (1988) said,

"While we might praise Dukakis for the sophistication and the forthrightness of his answers, the absence of emotion and feeling was disastrous" (p. 11). Brydon (1988) provided an exemplar of this problem, pointing out that, "What voters wanted to hear was not another position paper on crime, but how the man Dukakis feels about the victims of crime" (p. 4).

Prior to the second debate Representative Tony Coelho of Merced, the third-ranking member of the House Democratic Leadership said:

> Voters will want to see if he [Dukakis] is the type of guy you want to invite over for a cocktail or a barbecue . . . . [Right now] they'd rather have George Bush, who they don't like, than a blind date. Dukakis has got to stop being the blind date. If he projects warmth, he's got it. (Nelson & Shogan, 1988, October 13, pp. 1,16)

The first instant media poll conducted by ABC after the second debate ended showed Bush the winner 49 percent to 33 percent (Los Angeles Times, 1988, October 14, pp. 1, 24). Another poll performed by the Los Angeles Times (1988, October 14, pp. 1, 24) of 522 voters immediately after the debate found Bush was favored over Dukakis 47 percent to 26 percent--Dukakis, it seemed, was to remain the "blind date." A few days after the second debate it was noted that "The governor simply was not created for an age and political arena

where political leadership has been redefined by and for television. He looks very gubernatorial, but not, alas, very presidential" (Los Angeles Times, 1988, October 16, p. 5). Furthermore, Time (1988, November 21) noted that "As soon as the [second] debate was over, he [Dukakis] marched offstage, looking as if he were about to cry. He knew he had blown it" (p. 56).

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Appendix

Verbal Coding Sheet

Number of candidate messages: _____

Candidate: _____

A. Verbal Context of Message:
   1. Response to initial panelist question
   2. Response to follow-up question
   3. Rebuttal
   4. Closing statement

B. Length of message (in seconds): _____

C. Initiator of topics:
   1. Panelist-initiated topic
   2. Candidate-initiated topic
   3. Opponent-initiated topic

D. Attack/Refutation ratio:
   1. Attack on opponent
   2. Refutation from opponent remarks

E. Argumentative Tactics:
   1. Direct statement of policy
   2. Development and explanation
   3. Rhetorical question(s)
   4. Circumvention in response
   5. Redundancy
   6. Restatement of position at conclusion
   7. Talk about position of opponent
      a. Positive reference

b. Negative reference

8. Use of emotional appeals

a. To commonly held values: _____

b. To special audiences: _____

c. Other: _____

F. Debate Mistakes:

1. Unfamiliar jargon
2. Lack of development and explanation
3. Ineffective transitions in poorly developed or explained messages
4. Contradiction(s) in messages

G. Language Devices:

1. Literal analogy
2. Figurative analogy
3. Metaphor
4. Simile
5. Parallelism
6. Repetition
7. Alliteration
8. Antithesis
9. Loaded language

H. Forms of Support:

1. Factual illustration
2. Hypothetical illustration
3. Testimony
4. Statistics
5. Bolstering

I. Forms of Reasoning:

1. Deductive
2. Inductive
3. Analogical
4. Causal

K. Other Message Tactics:

1. Humor
2. Reference to opponent
   a. "Mr."--direct
   b. "Mr."--indirect
   c. Title--direct
   d. Title--indirect
   e. "My opponent"--direct
   f. "My opponent"--indirect
   g. Pronoun--direct
   h. Pronoun--indirect
   i. Name--direct
   j. Name--indirect
3. One-sided message
4. Two-sided message
5. Preemption of opponent attack
6. Shotgun blast (denunciation of opponent's character, record, positions, or campaign, shifting the burden of proof to the opponent)
7. Laundry list (series of difficult and often incriminating questions)
8. Direct challenge to the opponent
9. Turning the tables (redirecting the essence of the opponent's attack back at him)
10. Flat denial (denying the opponent's attack lines)
11. Quotable, compelling line

12. Highlighting evasiveness of opponent
13. Tossing bouquets (complementing the opponent)
14. Apology or confessional

L. Issues Raised in Messages:

M. Panelist Question (if applicable):

1. Hostile
2. Speculative
3. Hypothetical
4. Over specific
5. Leading
6. Value laden
7. Question begging
8. Multifaceted
9. Vague, unfocused
10. Bipolar (yes/no)
11. Two-in-one
12. Loaded
13. Prior Statement
14. Associating a response with a desirable goal
15. Asked previously